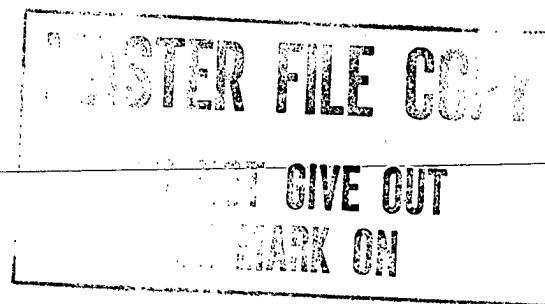




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# China: The Politics<sup>o</sup> of Hu Yaobang

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An Intelligence Assessment

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February 1983

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# **China: The Politics of Hu Yaobang**

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**An Intelligence Assessment**

This report was prepared by [redacted] of the  
Office of East Asian Analysis and [redacted]  
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Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
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## China: The Politics of Hu Yaobang

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### Key Judgments

*Information available  
as of 28 January 1983  
was used in this report.*

General Secretary Hu Yaobang, 67, has taken great strides toward consolidating his power since becoming head of the Chinese Communist Party in June 1981. His associates now hold key posts in most of the party's sensitive organs and occupy important government positions as well.

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Hu is far from secure, however. He did not earn the top party post as much as he had it handed to him by his mentor, Deng Xiaoping, over the objections of senior leaders. Many influential Chinese do not regard Hu as a leader in his own right but merely as Deng's protege.

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Hu has Deng's complete confidence—although they do not agree on everything—but we believe Hu's relations with other senior leaders are strained. Politburo member Ye Jianying in particular appears to us to have reservations about Hu. Hu has attempted to court the party elders, but we believe none of them, regardless of their personal feelings about Hu, would feel compelled to defer to him in Deng's absence.

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senior military officers distrust Hu. They believe he is too critical of Mao and the army's role in the Cultural Revolution, and they believe he lacks the stature and experience to lead the nation. Military men also see threats to their prerogatives and political power in the political and economic reforms that Hu champions.

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At the top of Hu's political agenda is the party purge scheduled to begin later this year and run through 1986. One key goal for Hu will be to remove as many opponents as possible, but Hu also sees the purge as a way to revitalize the party and restore respect for it as an institution. Hu was alarmed by events in Poland, and he believes the party must be cleansed of the corrupt and incompetent to avoid a similar situation in China. Thus, Hu advocates:

- A reduced role for the party in policy implementation.
- A larger role for intellectuals and technocrats.
- Less social regimentation and a somewhat freer artistic climate.
- More popular participation in local decisionmaking.

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In our judgment, Hu is not a key economic policymaker. He seems to have a relatively unsophisticated understanding of economics and the complexity of the problems facing China. Hu generally supports the economic reform program and has been an active supporter of increased foreign investment in China.

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We believe Hu has had relatively little influence in foreign policy matters until recently, but he is clearly expanding his role. Hu has very little first-hand knowledge of the world beyond China's borders, and he appears to have a very limited understanding of the Western democracies or appreciation of China's limitations. [REDACTED]

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Hu has adhered to the party line when discussing foreign policy issues publicly. [REDACTED]  
he: [REDACTED]

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- Supports efforts to reduce tensions with Moscow, but still sees the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to China's security.
- Tends to identify China's interests with those of the Third World. [REDACTED]

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Hu's test will come when Deng passes from the scene. Hu brings some considerable strengths—including a headstart and Deng's support—to the contest for influence that will follow. He is a very tough, clever, pragmatic politician who has demonstrated that he can not only survive in the rough-and-tumble world of Chinese politics, but thrive. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Hu is a man used to exercising power in the shadows and not someone to cross. [REDACTED]

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Hu's post-Deng prospects will improve if:

- Party elders like Ye die.
- Hu can increase his influence in the military by gaining a seat on the party body that sets military policy, advancing the careers of his supporters in the military, and forcing retirements in the senior officer corps.
- Hu continues to place associates in the party and government bureaucracies, especially the party's Organization Department, the internal security apparatus, and the economic planning organs. [REDACTED]

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Hu must also follow Deng's example and learn to court and placate his opponents. Hu's hard-driving personality, a strength in many ways, also makes him prone, in our judgment, to overreacting when the situation calls for a deft touch, and he could easily alienate friends as well as critics. [REDACTED]

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## China: The Politics of Hu Yaobang

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Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew, after meeting General Secretary Hu Yaobang, summed him up—accurately, we believe—as a man “used to exercising power in the shadows” and not someone to cross. Hu, 67, is a very tough, clever politician who during the Cultural Revolution faced a Red Guard mob with icy contempt. His enemies have purged him twice in his 50-year party career, and each time Hu has come back to settle scores. Like his mentor, Deng Xiaoping, Hu is willing to sacrifice policy and allies to achieve larger ends, and in China’s rough-and-tumble politics he has shown himself to be not only a survivor, but someone who thrives.<sup>1</sup>

Hu’s current standing in the party is something of a conundrum. He holds the top party post, but he does not wield the authority that goes with it; Deng is still the most powerful man in China. Furthermore, because Hu did not earn the top position as much as he had it handed to him by Deng over the objections of other senior leaders, he is in a race to consolidate his position before Deng passes from the scene.

Increasing his personal power is Hu’s primary concern, but he is also committed to carrying out an ambitious political and economic reform program designed to cleanse the party and raise living standards. We believe Hu, who has concentrated on domestic affairs throughout his career, has yet to put his mark on foreign policy.

### Hu’s Power Base

Recent appointments, dismissals, behind-the-scenes maneuvering all indicate to us that Hu is moving quickly to place men loyal to him in key positions.<sup>2</sup> These events also suggest to us that Hu is following a master plan and has a pool of loyal supporters to draw on, essential preconditions for success.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A is a psychological assessment of Hu. Appendix B is an analytical chronology of Hu’s career.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix C identifies Hu’s key supporters in the party, government, and provinces.

### Pronunciation Guide to Chinese Names

Chen	chun	Wang	wahng
Deng	dung	Wei	way
Geng	gung	Wu	woo
Hu	hoo	Xiang	sheeahng
Hua	hwah	Xu	shoo
Li	lee	Yang	yahng
Nie	neeyeh	Ye	yeh
Peng	pung	Zhang	jahng
Qin	chin	Zhao	jaow

The core of Hu’s personal power network is a group of former officials of the Communist Youth League (CYL) who served under Hu in the 1952-66 period. We can identify 60 former CYL officials serving in major government and party positions; most received their assignments under circumstances that suggest to us Hu was instrumental in placing them. Hu also has taken a very active role in rehabilitating hundreds of officials purged during the Cultural Revolution. Many are deceased or too aged to play an active role, but their former associates, whose careers stand to benefit from the restoration of their mentor’s reputation, may feel beholden to Hu.

Hu’s closest associates are Hu Qili, Hu Keshi, Li Chang, Wang Zhongfang, and Xiang Nan. Hu Qili, perhaps Hu’s principal ally, is a recent appointee to the party Secretariat and head of the party’s General Office, which controls the party paper flow and is active in preparing the purge that will begin this summer. Xiang is now the Fujian provincial party boss,





Figure 1. Hu meeting a Tibetan woman during a visit to Xizang (Tibet) in May 1980. Hu has traveled extensively in China during the last few years, campaigning for support from local officials and building his public image. [redacted]

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[redacted] Hu Keshi, Li, and Wang are key figures in the Chinese Academies of Science and Social Science, which often serve as think tanks for Hu and Deng. [redacted]

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We believe Hu is well on his way to establishing a solid grip on the party bureaucracy. He has chaired two of the most sensitive departments himself, Organization (1977-78) and Propaganda (1979-80), and associates now head nearly all the important ones. Exceptions are the Organization Department, led by Deng ally Song Renqiong, and the critical Military Commission, which sets military policy and oversees the political loyalty of the army. It is chaired by Deng. [redacted]

Hu's influence in the government and provinces is weaker than in the party, but he has a core of loyalists in those areas too. Soviet China-watchers have told diplomats in Beijing that approximately 20 officials at the vice minister rank or above have ties to Hu, generally through the CYL. In our opinion, Hu has relatively few associates in the economic ministries or on the planning commissions, fields dominated by Politburo members Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, and Premier Zhao Ziyang. Appointments in the Foreign Ministry last year, especially Wu Xueqian as Minister, indicate to us that expanding his influence in the foreign policy bureaucracy is a high priority for Hu. Hu had relatively little experience with foreign affairs before heading the party, and he wants his people in control of this vital policy arena. [redacted]

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**Hu Yaobang in Person**

*Hu Yaobang's close relationship with Deng Xiaoping over the years has earned him the sobriquet of "Deng's man." Foreign diplomats have noted Hu's similarity to Deng in style and mannerisms. This may equally well reflect conscious or unconscious imitation of Deng, habits acquired over their many years of close association, or Deng's choice of Hu as his protege because of their similarity in personality.*

*In meetings with Hu Yaobang, Western observers have been impressed with his intelligence, dynamism, self-confidence, and frankness. Hu also projects an image of himself as "a man of the people." On one occasion with a group of foreigners, he noted that he was just a "country bumpkin." He prefers to dress informally and has been known to punctuate his speech with earthy expressions in heavily Hunanese-accented Chinese. His energy and direct manner have led these same Western observers to compare him favorably with the more reserved Premier Zhao Ziyang or Hu's predecessor, Hua Guofeng.*

*Probably reflecting his long years in propaganda work, Hu Yaobang has a proselytizing speaking style.*

*His speaking style is animated and uses gestures—especially pointing his finger. Hu's extensive use of rhetorical questions and practical examples in his speeches also reflects his propaganda background.*

*We believe that the favorable opinion of Westerners who have met Hu stands in sharp contrast to the more mixed view of him expressed by Chinese. Although some Chinese are drawn to his "man of the people" style, the very qualities that ingratiate Hu to foreign statesmen, his energy and frankness, are not traits generally associated with leaders in China, where reserve and aloofness are prized. Deng Xiaoping, also known for his energy and candor, is an exception. Hu's animated style suggests a lack of refinement to many Chinese. Hu's nationally televised address to the Sixth Plenum in July 1981, when he rose from his seat repeatedly and pushed his voice close to its limits*

*Hu's self-effacing remarks at the Plenum, an effort to show respect to party elders opposed to his promotion, apparently were seen in some quarters as a sign of weakness.*

**An Image Problem.** Hu is also attempting to improve his image as a leader. We believe many Chinese have a negative impression of Hu. They do not see him as a national figure in his own right but merely as Deng's "go for." For example, sophisticated residents of Guangzhou who strongly support Deng are far less enthusiastic about Hu in comments to US officials. They dismiss him as an unimportant figure who "is incapable of leadership." Hu's personal style has also contributed to his image problems. (See box "Hu Yaobang in Person.")

We believe Deng has assumed a less public role in part to vacate the stage for Hu. Since becoming head

of the party in 1981, Hu has maintained a busy public schedule that tends to contrast his relative youth and vigor with the frailty of the party elders. Hu has toured the provinces dispensing instructions and investigating grievances with great fanfare. Despite injunctions on personality cults, the party press increasingly contains references to the authority of his statements. National television portrays Hu as a world leader who receives the respect of foreign visitors. In our view, however, such public relations efforts have made little impression on cynical Chinese, who continue to see Deng as the real leader of China

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Figure 2. Hu and Deng Xiaoping at the 12th Party Congress in September 1982.

### Relations With Key Political Players

**Deng and the Party Elders.** The ups and downs of Hu's career closely parallel Deng's. Hu clearly has Deng's complete confidence.

Deng has entrusted Hu with numerous sensitive political missions over the years.

Despite their closeness, Hu and Deng apparently do not agree on everything.

Deng is more conservative than Hu on social issues.

Hu is also more skeptical of the United States and warmer toward the Third World than Deng. Their differences, however, are clearly at the margins of most issues and generally seem to be matters of tone and emphasis rather than substance.

Hu is willing to buck Deng at times on personnel matters.

Hu has stated repeatedly and with apparent sincerity that Deng is still "the helmsman" and that Deng makes the hard decisions on major issues.

We believe Hu's relations with some top leaders are strained, and we doubt that any of the party's patriarchs would feel compelled to defer to Hu in Deng's absence. These men, who are in their seventies and in declining health, see Hu as a talented junior partner at best, and, while becoming less active, they still exert great influence over policy and personnel decisions.

Politburo member and party elder Ye Jianying in particular has reservations about Hu. Ye differs with Deng on aspects on the reform program, which Hu supports, and Hu's harsh criticism of Mao does not agree with Ye. Ye was also ex-party Chairman Hua Guofeng's staunchest supporter on the Politburo.

... To maintain the long-term stability and continuity of our party organizations, maintain and carry forward our party's fine traditions, and continuously implement its lines, principles and policies, it is necessary for the old comrades ... to retire to the second line ...<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Remarks during visit to Auhui in December 1982.

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Figure 3. Hu and three of the most influential party elders, Chen Yun (seated left), Deng (seated right), and Li Xiannian (standing).



Wide World ©

Publicly and in face-to-face situations, however, Hu has been careful to praise the elders and to appear deferential. His effusive praise for them and his self-effacing statements after his promotion were intended to win them over.

**Zhao and Peers.** We believe Hu regards Premier Zhao Ziyang as a talented subordinate and not as a partner.

Hu may see Zhao as a potential rival.<sup>4</sup> Zhao too shares Deng's confidence, although he is not nearly as close to Deng as Hu is, and Zhao is the leader many Chinese associate with the most successful reform policies. Zhao's reserved style also more closely fits

the Chinese image of the ideal leader,

The evidence is circumstantial but Hu appears to be taking measures to ensure that Zhao's influence does not grow to rival his own.

many informed Chinese expected Zhao to gain a seat on the powerful party Secretariat at the 12th Congress last September. He did not, and this key oversight body was packed with Hu's associates. Associates of Zhao also did poorly in the government reorganization last spring, although the government bureaucracy is Zhao's bailiwick; allies of Hu did reasonably well. Hu's strong advocacy of separating party and government functions has the effect of reducing further the government's policy formulating role, thus making the post of premier a less powerful position.

Other real or potential rivals of Hu have fared less well. Hua Guofeng was purged, and the 12th Party Congress also removed Peng Chong from the Politburo. Peng, who retains his government posts, is one of the very few leaders who is young enough and sufficiently well connected to become a rival on his own.

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Figure 4. Hu and the frail Ye Jianying, who opposed Hu's elevation to head of the party. [redacted]



Figure 5. Hu and Premier Zhao Ziyang at the 12th Party Congress. [redacted]

Peng also was responsible for the internal security apparatus, a crucial function assumed by one of Hu's close associates. Deng largely engineered the removal of both men, and he can be expected to move against any others who show signs of coveting the top job. [redacted]

#### The Military [redacted]

[redacted] senior military officers are uneasy with Hu. We believe in 1981 they denied him a seat on the party's Military Commission, the organ that sets military policy, although Hu's position as party head entitled him to the chairmanship. Some officers even prefer abolishing the body to giving Hu a seat. [redacted]

Such sentiments seem to represent the extreme point of view, however, and in our judgment Hu's differences with the military at this time are not so severe that he faces an insurrection once Deng dies. [redacted]

[redacted] Some officers believe Hu lacks the stature to head the party (some refer to him as "the cricket" or "Mr. Nonsense," a pun on his name), and others focus on his lack of military experience. Hu is regarded as too liberal on cultural and social issues by many, and Hu's outspoken and frequent criticism of Mao, who is still revered in military circles, has alienated military men. There

seems to be a belief in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) that Hu does not understand or appreciate the army's needs and that, once Ye and Deng pass from the scene, the military will be without a sympathetic ear at the most senior party levels. Many military men are wary of the political and economic reform program, which they see threatening their prerogatives and political power. [redacted]

*Mao Zedong made enormous contributions to the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party. But he also committed errors, especially in his later years. These errors brought misfortune to the party and people. Chairman Mao and other leaders bear the responsibility for the abnormal conditions that developed during the Cultural Revolution.*<sup>5</sup> [redacted]

*The Cultural Revolution was more than a revolution: a disaster.*<sup>6</sup> [redacted]

To some degree the military's concerns are justified. Certainly the reform program will reduce the PLA's political clout, and Hu's views on social and cultural issues are more liberal than the army's. In our opinion

<sup>5</sup> Remarks to a Yugoslav journalist in June 1980. [redacted]

<sup>6</sup> Remark to Secretary General Carrillo of the Spanish Communist Party in November 1980. [redacted]

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Figure 6. Hu and key military supporter, Chief of Staff Yang Dezhi, sweeping a street as part of "Socialist Ethics Month."

Eastfoto ©

Hu has fed the suspicions with his frequent harsh statements about Mao and the Cultural Revolution and his tendency to say different things to different audiences.

Not all military officers are opposed to Hu. [redacted] influential men like Chief of Staff Yang Dezhi and Beijing Military Region Commander Qin Jiwei support him. Moreover, the military is not a unified, single political actor; all the points of view present in Chinese society are reflected in the PLA, and no one man can "deliver" the army in the succession. The opposition to Hu seems concentrated at the very top, [redacted]

[redacted] We believe the influence of this group has declined as a result of last year's government reorganization and changes made in the military command structure in the last several months. [redacted]

Both Hu and Deng have expended considerable energy wooing the military in the last two years. Deng has made fewer public appearances in part to build Hu's image as a leader, and Hu in his frequent addresses to military audiences has tried hard to assuage their concerns about the impact of the reform program and the party's criticism of Mao. Under pressure Hu has

adopted positions closer to the military on cultural issues, and he criticized those seeking an investigation of military abuses during the Cultural Revolution. Hu has also toured in the provinces and met with the regional military commands. In our view, however, Hu's actions may have impressed younger officers but probably have done little to alleviate senior military concerns or doubts about his leadership. [redacted]

**Intellectuals.** The intellectual and artistic communities are Hu's most ardent supporters. Hu has argued in the leadership for relaxing controls on the arts and for giving intellectuals a leading role in the modernization program. He has also defended intellectuals from more conservative elements, particularly the military, who are angered by their criticism of Mao, the PLA, and socialism. Although Hu has taken a harder line on cultural issues lately, many intellectuals profess to understand the political necessity and claim not to harbor ill will toward Hu, [redacted]

The intellectual community is not a political force in China, but it has performed valuable services for Hu. He has used their talents to criticize and discredit the views of opponents, including Hua and the military. The intellectuals are also a source of policy expertise and advice in areas where Hu needs assistance, such as economic and technical issues. [redacted]

#### Policy Views

Our knowledge of Hu's policy views is clouded by his tendency to tailor his remarks to his audience and the fact that most public statements in China reflect a general leadership view rather than personal opinion. Our records suggest to us, too, that until recently Hu has tended to be more of an executor of policy than a formulator [redacted]

Two facts, however, clearly emerge from Hu's speeches and statements over the years: his primary concern is the health and well-being of the party, and he is most influential in the area of party policy and personnel. Hu speaks with the greatest passion when discussing the need to restore popular confidence in

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the party and repair the damage done to the institution by Mao and the Cultural Revolution. Hu justifies much of his political program in terms of recapturing the spirit of commitment and self-sacrifice he believes characterized the pre-1949 period. [REDACTED]

*The basic tenets of Mao Zedong's thinking . . . still are of a guiding significance for Chinese cadres . . . (but) some of the tenets are no longer applied.*<sup>7</sup> [REDACTED]

Despite a close personal identification with the party and its ideals, Hu has a well-deserved reputation as a pragmatist. We believe Hu, like Deng, judges the value of a policy by its results and, if need be, will use his considerable intellectual abilities and in-depth knowledge of Marxism to find an appropriate ideological justification. Hu's pragmatism has its bounds, however. Like other top leaders, he will not abide those who question the suitability of socialism for China or challenge the role of the party. [REDACTED]

**Political Agenda.** A thorough purge of the party, which is scheduled to begin later this year and run through 1986, is at the top of Hu's agenda. He has led the fight to rehabilitate cadre purged in the Cultural Revolution and to punish those responsible for the excesses of the period. Hu has been among the most strident in calling for the removal from the party of two other classes of individuals as well: those who have failed to support wholeheartedly the reform program and the incompetent.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, Hu is one of Mao's harshest critics. [REDACTED]

In most of his official statements, Hu has stressed that "very few" people will lose their party membership, but we believe Hu is actually targeting millions of individuals. [REDACTED]

<sup>7</sup> Remarks to a Yugoslav journalist in June 1980. [REDACTED]

Hu realizes he cannot sweep the party clean of all opponents, but he has positioned himself to exert the most influence over the purge. Hu's closest associate, Hu Qili, is in charge of planning the campaign, according to a *People's Daily* editor, and Hu himself is active in the party's Central Discipline Inspection Commission and the Special Investigation Group, which is ferreting out Gang of Four followers. Other Hu associates are involved in internal security and party administration. [REDACTED]

In addition to the purge, Hu argues that if the party is going to provide leadership it must become a leaner, less autocratic organization and there must be a clear separation of party and government functions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Hu also favors relaxing the class-background test for party membership, upgrading educational requirements, and allowing intellectuals a larger role in party councils. Improved discipline, including the elimination of corruption, and greater emphasis on personal responsibility are major themes in Hu's speeches and statements. Perhaps most important, Hu believes party institutions must be strengthened so that no one can abuse authority as Mao did. [REDACTED]

The personnel and institutional changes advocated by Hu serve his own political needs, but we believe they also reflect a deep personal concern about declining popular confidence in the party and its leadership. We believe Hu is one of the leaders most alarmed by events in Poland. In analyzing the roots of that crisis, Hu points to four factors: overdependence on the Soviet Union, insufficient attention to living standards, too little democracy, and abuse of privilege by party officials. Hu points out that the last three factors exist to some degree in China. [REDACTED]

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*If you do not act as you preach, nobody will listen to you. You say you will serve the people wholeheartedly, but, if you do not act as you say, the consequences will be very bad. People will listen to you if you act as you preach. This is the most important requirement for doing a good job in ideological and political work.*<sup>9</sup> [redacted]

Hu's remedy—besides cleansing the party—is to implement the reform program. In speeches Hu has stressed especially:

- Strengthening the legal system.
- Promoting intellectuals and experts regardless of class backgrounds to responsible positions, especially in the economy.
- Reducing social controls including those on the arts.
- Allowing more popular participation in local decisionmaking.

[redacted] Hu is willing to tolerate more ferment in the system than other leaders. Hu's support for the "democracy wall movement" in 1979 bolsters this impression. [redacted]

**Economic Views.** Hu does not seem to be a key economic policymaker; Politburo members Chen Yun and Premier Zhao share that responsibility and we believe Hu defers to them. Moreover, we believe Hu may have a relatively unsophisticated understanding of economics and the complexity of the problems facing China. In our view, he has a tendency to see China's economic problems as essentially personnel problems; this is an important aspect of the situation but to emphasize it underestimates the primacy of institutional obstacles to growth. Reflecting his long years in propaganda and ideological work, he also seems to overestimate the value of propaganda campaigns and moral suasion as solutions to economic and other policy problems. [redacted]

Based on the relatively few statements we have, Hu's views on economic development strategy seem closer to Chen Yun's, a cautious supporter of the reform program, than Zhao's, one of the program's most enthusiastic advocates. Like other leaders Hu has

<sup>9</sup> Remarks to cadres on need to improve the image of the party in January 1983. [redacted]

endorsed the principle of giving managers more control over their enterprises, but his speeches have a more orthodox Marxist tone and stress central planning and limits on experimentation; Hu liberally quotes Chen on these issues. We believe Hu may also favor a somewhat faster rate of growth than other leaders. In a 1980 speech in which he bitterly attacked Hua, Hu stated Hua's advocacy of high economic targets and heavy industry, which other reformers were attacking, was not a major shortcoming. [redacted]

Hu has strongly supported the Special Economic Zones, four small areas on China's coast where extensive foreign investment is encouraged. During a recent inspection tour of the provinces, Hu attempted to reassure nervous cadre that the pseudocapitalistic zones have the support of the leadership and that cadre who enforce controversial economic policies today will not suffer politically tomorrow. He also stated that China's open door to the world will continue—media warnings about a dangerous influx of bourgeois influences notwithstanding—and encouraged local officials to expand their foreign trade. [redacted]

*We should promote a new cooperative economy by encouraging the peasants to pool their money together to start their own undertakings, be shareholders of their own businesses, manage their businesses democratically, and determine the amounts of their bonuses.*<sup>10</sup> [redacted]

[redacted] a public letter to a provincial official last March indicate to us that Hu is more willing to reduce central control of agriculture than of industry. He favors giving greater authority over income, field management, and marketing to the peasant with the collective retaining only formal title to the land and Beijing a say in the mix of crops sown. Hu also endorses a system of private peddlers who would travel from village to village buying and selling excess production, a practice criticized as petty capitalism and speculation in the past. [redacted]

<sup>10</sup> Remarks during a visit to Anhui Province in December 1982. [redacted]

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**Foreign Policy.** Based on our review of Hu's career, we believe he has had little influence in foreign policy matters in the past; until his elevation to General Secretary he focused almost entirely on domestic politics. Hu has downplayed his role in foreign affairs during conversations with visitors—he has always stuck close to the official line in such meetings—

[redacted] Deng still makes the major decisions, and he continues to have the sensitive, substantive conversations with visitors.

We believe Hu fully expects to assume Deng's role, however, and he clearly is expanding his influence in foreign affairs. He is seeing more foreigners and placing associates in the foreign policy bureaucracy. Hu is particularly well represented in the party's United Front Work Department and International Liaison Department, which suggests to us Hu is particularly interested in such issues as the status of Hong Kong and Taiwan and party-to-party relations.

Hu has almost no firsthand knowledge of the world beyond China's borders. He visited Romania, Albania, and the Soviet Union briefly in the 1950s and the early 1960s, Kampuchea in 1978, and North Korea in 1982. To our knowledge he has never traveled in a non-Communist country, and until last year he met very few foreigners who were not Marxists or Socialists. Given his concentration on internal politics throughout his career, Hu's understanding of the Western democracies would appear to be very limited. As far as we know, Hu speaks no foreign language.

Elements of the traditional ethnocentric Chinese view of the world are evident in Hu's speeches and comments. A tone of moral superiority comes through Hu's pronouncements, as when he told one party gathering that China's international relations are distinguished by a high degree of integrity. Like his 19th century forebearers, Hu is very interested in acquiring Western know-how but is concerned about the cultural attitudes and "bourgeois" values that might accompany it. Hu reminded a group of writers

in 1980 that, although foreigners have skills China needs, they are not comrades and must not be treated as Chinese.

Hu strikes us as poorly informed about how advanced much of the world is compared with China, which is not surprising given his limited travel and contacts with foreigners.

At the Ambassador's conference last summer, Hu stated that morale in embassies would improve if officials traveled more in their host country; they would then appreciate the quality of life in China. As is the case in other policy areas, better ideological education is Hu's standard prescription for combating the appeal of Western lifestyles.

Analysis of Hu's conversations and speeches on foreign relations suggest to us that he favors identifying China more closely with Third World interests.

Hu differs with Deng on this issue, and Hu would also prefer a more passive foreign policy that would allow China to concentrate on domestic issues.

Hu's views on relations with the United States are very much in keeping with his view of the world and limited exposure to the West.

Hu is more skeptical of the relationship with the United States than Deng, and a

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[redacted] Hu is one of those taking a particularly hard line on US dealings with Taiwan. Caution is required, but the few private remarks Hu has made on the political relationship seem to support their assessments. In a speech to the Secretariat in 1981, Hu reportedly accused Washington of paying attention to Beijing only when forced to, and, [redacted] Hu made a point of noting that friendly Sino-US relations are a fairly recent development and the exception to the rule. The 1981 speech did acknowledge the strategic importance of the United States in dealing with the Soviet threat, however, and when discussing the economic relationship with US officials, Hu has expressed interest in expanding trade and exchanges.

[redacted]  
Hu has kept to the party line when discussing Sino-Soviet relations. [redacted]

[redacted] and we believe he supports efforts to reduce tensions with the Soviet Union. The history of Sino-Soviet relations and his analysis of Poland's problems suggest to us that he is wary of moving too close or too quickly. We believe recent statements to the press by Hu that convey an impression of flexibility, including a willingness to restore party-to-party relations under the right circumstances, reflect a leadership position rather than Hu's personal view. The 1981 speech to the Secretariat, and other speeches since then, indicate to us that Hu has not changed his perception of the Soviet threat to China. [redacted]

#### The Task Before Hu

**A Succession Balance Sheet.** Hu enters the succession sweepstakes with some significant advantages that seem to be increasing. He already has the top title, General Secretary of the party, and he enjoys the trust of the most influential man in China, Deng. Deng, moreover, has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to expend his political capital to advance Hu's cause. Hu has begun building an impressive power base in the party, and he is in an excellent position to expand it during the upcoming purge. [redacted]

Many of the most frequently voiced objections to Hu—his relative youth, inexperience in military affairs, lack of national stature—apply with equal or

greater force to most would-be rivals. Hu's headstart coupled with Deng's comparatively good health make it very difficult for a peer to challenge Hu. [redacted]

These pluses are enhanced by Hu's considerable personal abilities. Chinese press reports, credible in light of the descriptions of those who have met Hu, present a picture of a man capable of working long hours to see that his ideas become reality. In an aging and infirm leadership, Hu may simply be able to outwork his opponents—particularly those among the party elders. A self-confident man steeled in the rough-and-tumble politics of the Cultural Revolution, Hu is a political competitor who will not passively accept defeat. [redacted]

Hu's weaknesses are more difficult to assess because they are more subjective. Some of his personal traits, for instance, could easily become liabilities. Hu's considerable drive produces behavior that may be viewed by others as impulsive and exceeding his authority. He injects himself into minor matters over which he does not have major responsibility, a pattern which may in the long run generate considerable resentment even among his political allies. He also has a tendency to speak rashly and to make snap judgments, which he later has to qualify or reverse. [redacted]

The seriousness of Hu's image problem is also hard to gauge. The temptation is to minimize it, but Hu is still a man who reached the top on Deng's coattails, not because he convinced the senior leadership of his ability. In our judgment, 18 months after reaching the top, Hu is not yet viewed as an independent leader. [redacted]

Hu needs a policy success, too, which would help his image problem. Unfortunately for him, policies he is closely identified with—the new minorities policy,<sup>12</sup> the easing of restrictions on the arts and dissent—are floundering or have been partially reversed or have generally failed to yield the expected results. Increasingly, Hu has attempted to link his name with the successful agricultural reforms by appearing at forums that tout their success. The agricultural reforms, however, are more closely identified with Zhao, who

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pioneered them in Sichuan Province, and it is unlikely that Hu will garner little more than reflected glory [ ]

In our judgment the largest question facing Hu is whether he can hold the reform coalition together—elders and peers. Like Hu, Deng has a reputation for abrasiveness and bullheadedness, but, after his return to power in 1978, Deng found the ability to compromise and to placate while patiently advancing his program. The immediate post-Deng period will be tense as elders and peers jockey for influence. Hu will have to court and placate and cajole other players if he is to consolidate his power. Hu's impulsive, hard-charging style makes him prone, in our judgment, to overreact in a situation requiring a deft touch, and he could easily alienate friends as well as critics. Hu's chances for success will improve materially if he can learn from Deng. [ ]

**Bureaucratic Musts.** Because of the progress he has made, Hu's survival is becoming less a question of how long Deng lives and more a question of Hu's ability to put a few more important pieces in place. Three broad areas stand out—the party elders, military, and party/government bureaucracy. [ ]

Hu's progress in these three areas can be gauged in the months ahead by his success in accomplishing some specific tasks. To the degree that the following occurs, Hu increases his chances of surviving and prospering after Deng dies:

- Party elders die, but most especially Politburo members Ye, Chen, Li Xiannian, Li Desheng, Zhang Tingfa, Wei Guoqing, and Peng Zhen.
- Hu gains at least a seat on the Military Commission, preferably its chairmanship.
- Yang Dezhi and Qin Jiwei increase their influence in the military.
- Xiang Nan, Hu's candidate, replaces Song Renqiong as head of the Organization Department.
- Hu's associates gain leadership positions in the Ministry of Public Security and the economic planning bureaucracy, where Chen and Zhao are strongest.
- The party purge begins on time and succeeds in removing critics of the Deng-Hu program down to senior provincial levels. [ ]

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## Appendix B

### An Analytical Chronology of Hu Yaobang's Career



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Figure 9. Hua Guofeng, Mao's handpicked successor and the man Deng replaced with Hu. [redacted]



Figure 10. Hu in the 1950s when he was head of the Communist Youth League. [redacted]

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- 1915 Born in Hunan Province.
- 1921 Chinese Communist Party founded at Shanghai in July.
- 1927 Participated at age 12 in the Autumn Harvest Uprising in Hunan, one of a series of bloody clashes instigated throughout China that year by the party. It was crushed and the survivors, including Mao, fled to mountainous areas and began rebuilding the party.
- 1931 Japanese began military expansion in China and the Chinese Communist Party declared war on Japan.
- 1933 Active in Communist Youth League in the "liberated area" of central China.
- 1934 Nationalist forces surrounded and crushed the liberated area, and party leaders, including Hu, began the Long March to Yanan, a sanctuary in north China.
- 1936 Studied at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political Academy in Yanan and was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League.
- 1937 The Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July marked the beginning of the full-scale Japanese offensive in China.
- 1941 Active in the Organization Department of the General Political Department of the 18th Army Corps.

- 1945 World War II ended and Chinese civil war began. Hu was active in political work in the 2nd Field Army, in which Deng was the Political Commissar.
- 1950 Active in North Sichuan Military Government after Communist victory.
- 1952 Became a secretary of the New Democratic Youth League, the postliberation name for the Communist Youth League, and transferred to Beijing.
- 1953 Headed Chinese delegation to the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Bucharest, Romania, and was elected Vice Chairman of the World Federation.
- 1956 Elected to the Eighth Central Committee and gave the report on youth work to the Congress.
- 1957 Mao's call to "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" led to sharp criticism from intellectuals about the party and Communism. The regime cracked down on intellectuals. Hu was now head of the Communist Youth League (renamed again) and attended the World Youth Festival in Moscow.
- 1958 Great Leap Forward began and resulted in massive setbacks for the economy. Hu very active in youth work during the period.
- 1962 Led a Sino-Albanian Friendship delegation to Albania for 1 October, Chinese National Day. While there, Hu made a very tough anti-Soviet speech in which he reaffirmed standard Chinese positions in the Sino-Soviet dispute.
- 1964 Made very few appearances between 1962 and 1964, but reelected First Secretary of the Communist Youth League in July.
- 1965 Named Third Secretary of the Northwest Bureau of the party Central Committee and First Secretary of Shaanxi Province. Hu's exact status in the leadership was confused by contradictory identifications in the Chinese media and his continuing appearances in Beijing.
- 1966 Purged during the Cultural Revolution as a member of the Liu Shaoqi-Deng Xiaoping Antiparty Clique.
- 1972 Reappeared in April 1972 but was not identified as holding a political post.
- 1973 Hu's mentor Deng Xiaoping was rehabilitated and appointed Vice Premier.
- 1975 As Deng's influence grew, Hu became more active. At work in the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which became a source of expertise and policy ideas for Deng.
- 1976 In January Premier Zhou Enlai died and Deng and Hu were purged again. Mao died in September and the Gang of Four were toppled from power a month later.

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- 1977 Hu returned to public life in March and Deng returned in July. The two men commenced a long struggle to unseat party Chairman Hua Guofeng. Hu was elected to the 11th Central Committee and became head of the party's Organization Department. He was also Vice President of the Party School. These posts put him in a position to influence the removal of Gang of Four supporters from the party.
- 1978 Elevated to the Politburo at the Third Plenum of the 11th Congress in December. The Congress laid the ideological foundation for the reform program. Hu also became Third Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission. In November he led a Chinese delegation to Kampuchea.
- 1979 Hu became head of the party Propaganda Department in January and relinquished control of the Organization Department. He also served as Secretary General of the Central Committee.
- 1980 At the Fifth Plenum of the 11th Congress in February, Hu was elevated to the Politburo Standing Committee. The Congress also reestablished the Secretariat, which Hu headed as General Secretary. The Secretariat began to evolve into the key organ responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the party. As Hu's political fortunes improved, Hua Guofeng's declined; four key supporters of Hua were dropped from the Politburo at the Plenum. Zhao Ziyang replaced Hua as Premier in September.
- 1981 Final blow for Hua came at Sixth Plenum in June when he was forced to resign as Chairman after 15 months of political maneuvering. Hu was named to replace him.
- 1982 The 12th Party Congress abolished the position of chairman and vice chairman of the party, leaving Hu atop the party structure as General Secretary. Hu began to meet more foreign visitors and traveled to North Korea with Deng.



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## Appendix C

## Key Associates of Hu Yaobang

National officials are listed under more than one category if they hold more than one major position. Provincial officials are listed only in the provincial section, even though some also hold national titles.

Identifications are based on similar career patterns, promotion under circumstances suggesting Hu's acquiescence if not initiative, and simultaneous purges.

Party organs		Party organs (continued)	
Bai Zhimin	Deputy Director, Organization Department; member, Central Discipline Inspection Commission; member, 12th Central Committee.	Li Shuzheng	Deputy Director, International Liaison Department; alternate member, 12th Central Committee.
Chen Pixian	Member, Secretariat; member, 12th Central Committee.	Liao Chengzhi	Member, 12th Central Committee.
Feng Wenbin	Deputy Director, Party History Research Center; Vice President, Party School.	Ou Tangliang	Adviser, International Liaison Department.
Gao Zhanxiang	Secretary, Communist Youth League; Vice Chairman, All-China Youth Federation; alternate member, 12th Central Committee.	Qian Liren	Deputy Director, International Liaison Department.
Guo Chunyun	Member, Central Discipline Inspection Commission.	Wang Zhaohua	Deputy Director, Organization Department; member, 12th Central Committee.
Han Tianshi	Secretary, Central Discipline Inspection Commission.	Wu Xueqian	Member, 12th Central Committee.
He Jingzhi	Deputy Director, Propaganda Department; member, 12th Central Committee.	Yang Jingren	Director, United Front Work Department; member, 12th Central Committee.
Hu Qiaomu	Member, Politburo; member, 12th Central Committee.	Zhang Jingfu	Member, 12th Central Committee.
Hu Qili	Member, Secretariat; Director, General Office; member, 12th Central Committee.	Zhou Pengcheng	Secretary, Communist Youth League.
Hu Sheng	Director, Party History Research Center; member, 12th Central Committee.	<b>Government posts</b>	
Jiang Nanxiang	Member, 12th Central Committee.	Ding Hao	Ambassador to Ecuador.
Li Chang	Secretary, Central Discipline Inspection Commission.	Gao Yangwen	Minister of Coal.
Li Ding	Deputy Director, United Front Work Department.	Hao Jianxiu	Minister of Textiles.
		Li Menghua	Minister in Charge, State Physical Culture and Sports Commission; Vice Chairman, All-China Sports Federation.
		Liao Chengzhi	Vice Chairman, National People's Congress; Director, Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs.
		Lu Jindong	Vice Minister, State Physical Culture and Sports Commission; Vice Chairman, All-China Sports Federation.

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Government posts (continued)		Provinces	
Ma Yi	Vice Minister, State Economic Commission.	Bai Jinian	Vice Governor, Shaanxi.
Meng Yue	Ambassador to Tunisia.	Dong Xin	Vice Governor, Jilin.
Song Yiping	Deputy Secretary General, State Council.	Ke Ligeng	Vice Chairman, Nei Monggol Autonomous Region People's Congress.
Wang Wei	Vice Minister, Public Health.	Li Ligong	Executive Secretary, Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee; member, Central Discipline Inspection Commission.
Wu Xueqian	Minister, Foreign Affairs.	Li Qiming	Second Secretary, Yunnan Provincial Party Committee; First Secretary, Yunnan Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission; member, 12th Central Committee.
Xu Cai	Vice Minister, State Physical Culture and Sports Commission.	Li Ruihuan	Mayor, Tianjin; Secretary, Communist Youth League; Vice Chairman, All-China Youth Federation; member, 12th Central Committee.
Xu Yinsheng	Vice Minister, State Physical Culture and Sports Commission; Vice Chairman, All-China Youth Federation.	Liang Buting	Governor, Shandong; member, 12th Central Committee.
Yang Jingren	Minister in Charge, State Nationalities Affairs Commission.	Liu Bing	Vice Governor, Gansu.
Zhang Jingfu	Minister in Charge, State Economic Commission; State Councillor.	Liu Daosheng	Secretary, Beijing Municipal Party Committee.
Intellectual community		Liu Xiyuan	Deputy Political Commissar, Nanjing Military Region.
Feng Wenbin	Chairman, Commission for Collecting Party Historical Data; President, Research Society for Chinese Communist Party Historical Figures.	Meng Xiande	Secretary, Guangdong Provincial Party Committee; Vice Governor, Guangdong.
He Jingzhi	Vice President, China's Writer's Association.	Shen Xiaozeng	Secretary, Ningxia Provincial Party Committee.
Hu Keshi	Vice President, Chinese Academy of Sciences.	Wang Chaowen	Secretary, Guizhou Provincial Party Committee.
Jiang Nanxiang	Vice Chairman, National Academic Degrees Committee.	Xiang Nan	First Secretary, Fujian Provincial Party Committee; member, 12th Central Committee.
Li Chang	Executive Chairman, Presidium of Chinese Academy of Sciences.	Xiao Hua	First Political Commissar, Lanzhou Military Region; Secretary, Gansu Provincial Party Committee; member, Military Commission of the party.
Qian Junrui	Director, Institute of World Economics, Chinese Academy of Sciences.	Xu Jianchu	Vice Chairman, Shandong Provincial People's Congress; Secretary, Shandong Communist Youth League.
Song Yiping	Vice President, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.		
Wang Zhongfang	Deputy Secretary General, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Director, Law Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.		
Xu Liqun	Director, Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.		

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Yan Jimin	Vice Governor, Henan
Zhang Huaisan	Secretary, Tianjin Municipal Party Committee.
Zhang Ze	Executive Secretary, Shaanxi Pro- vincial Party Committee; member, 12th Central Committee.
Zhao Zengyi	Acting Governor, Jiangxi; Secretary, Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee.

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